

APPENDIX H: Clean-up Information Sheets

Clean-ups along rivers and streams can be an important follow up to Shoreline Surveys. Some clean-ups will have the immediate result of making the rivers more attractive for anglers, canoeists, walkers, and landowners. Clean-ups may accelerate the natural restoration processes of new vegetation along the stream banks. We ask that you leave the river and its banks in a natural state giving careful consideration to the following:

Conservation Commissions:

- In order to protect the wetlands, streams and banks, the Wetlands Protection Act (and in some cases local wetland bylaws) give Conservation Commissions jurisdiction over any activity that takes place in the wetlands and within 100 feet of wetlands and streams. Consult with them and show them where you plan to clean up. You will need their permission for removal of trees, logs, and vegetation in these critical areas. To make an appointment to discuss these issues with the Commission, call Town or City Hall and ask to speak to the Commission administrator or to a Commission member. **Enclosed is a form that you can fill out and give to the Commission.** Find out if you need to make formal application.

Property rights:

- Before crossing over or cleaning privately owned lands, be sure to get permission from the landowner.

Protection of the river:

- Because the river's natural flow needs to be protected, and because streams naturally change their direction, avoid trying to steer them or contain them within the confines of a certain area by barriers.
- Use cutting and clearing equipment in such a way as to avoid and minimize streambank erosion.
- Direct volunteers to avoid trampling the stream bank where the growth of young or fragile plants prevents bank erosion.

Wildlife/habitat:

- Remember the trees and shrubs adjacent to a stream provide shade which helps keep streams at temperatures below 70 degrees so that they will provide healthy habitat for fish and discourage the growth of algae.
- Branches and logs in streams provide protection for fish and small animals. It is important to maintain a certain percentage of shade cover from nearby trees over a stream bed as well as to leave some logs in streams to provide protection for fish and small animals.
- Small wildlife and birds use brush and ground vegetation for habitat and foraging. Remove only the amount absolutely necessary for your purpose (fishing, walking and canoe access.)
- Instream work in streams used by migrating alewives should be done during July and August. This is to avoid the spawning and migrating season. It is best to do instream work when flows are at their annual low.

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STREAM CLEAN-UP TIPS

Before you start your clean-up talk to your group about what can be done and what can not be done according to your clean-up project plans and the comments of the Conservation Commission.

Remember that a clean-up should benefit the river and leave it in a healthy natural state. It is not just to make it nicer for the people using the river.

Follow common sense safety rules and keep in mind the following suggestions.

- Always work with in pairs or with a team captain.
- All children must have adult supervision.
- Do not put yourself in danger. The streambed can be very slippery and uneven, sometimes at unpredictable places and times. Move slowly.
- Watch for sharp objects submerged in the streambed and on the banks or nails in old planks or logs.
- Do not attempt to walk across streams that are swift and above knee in depth. These can be dangerous.
- Be alert for spawning areas and shellfish beds; do not disturb or walk on them.
- Watch for poison ivy and brambles, ticks, nettles, and insects. Bring repellent; wear long pants and boots.
- Consider landowners rights. Try to get the permission of landowners to cross private property, posted or not. Do not enter posted areas without permission. Take advantage of public access points.
- Persons using canoes must wear personal safety flotation devices and keep clear of volunteers on foot.
- Chain saws must be used only by owners and when other methods are inadequate. Others should stay clear of the area when chain saws are in use.
- Be sure to review your clean up plan with the Conservation Commission.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT THE STREAM CONDITIONS OR SURROUNDINGS, PLEASE STOP YOUR CLEANUP. YOU AND YOUR SAFETY ARE MUCH MORE VALUABLE THAN ANY OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE CLEAN UP.

(These safety tips come from the Town River Clean-Up Committee of the Taunton River Watershed Alliance and EPA Region 10 Streamwalk.)

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Stream Clean-ups

Because Conservation Commission have jurisdiction over work done within 100 feet of stream banks and wetlands, talk with your Commission before beginning your work. Fill out this worksheet before you talk with them.

Conservation Commission Worksheet for

A RIVER CLEAN-UP FOR THE _____ RIVER

Proposed by (group) _____

Proposed work date(s) _____
rain date (s) _____

Date of approval by Conservation Commission _____

Groups' contact persons' names, address and tel no.:

1. What is the purpose of your clean up? (access to river, canoe access, canoe passage through river, fishing access, habitat improvement) Describe:

Is the work you propose going to be? (you may need to determine this as you talk with the Commission members)

- ____ on the bank itself
- ____ on the stream bottom
- ____ in a wetland
- ____ in the buffer zone (within 100' of stream or wetlands)

Does the work include?

- ____ removing man made litter for scenic improvement
- ____ removing brush for walking or canoe access: describe amount and type of vegetation to be removed.
- ____ clearing the stream for canoe passage: will logs be left for fisheries and wildlife habitat? What is the minimum the group can remove and still allow canoe passage?
- ____ clearing the bottom of the stream of man-made trash?
- ____ other, describe:

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2. Define Where you are going to work.

2. Show the Commission on a map and describe the area as best you can. (Along the banks of the X river, between X street and Y bridge, from the bank to about 50 feet from the river.)

3. What tools do you plan to use?

- ☐ hand-held tools only
- ☐ power tools
- ☐ bobcats? trucks?
- ☐ other, describe?

4. How will you dispose of the trash collected?

5. What measures are you going to use to protect the natural resources: e.g. banks from eroding, silt from going into the stream, wetland damage. (This also may be determined in conjunction with the Commission.) Examples: leave vegetation on the banks, not cut the wetland vegetation, leave brush on the ground, leave enough logs on the stream for pooling and shelter for fisheries.

6. Do you have written permission from the landowner(s)? _____
Name(s) of owners

7. Conservation Commission Guidelines:

It is the responsibility of the applicants to inform the clean-up volunteers of the scope of the work to be done and the guidelines of the Conservation Commission.

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